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SUBJECT: CZECHS ON THE FEBRUARY 12-13 GAERC

REF: A. STATE 13840

[1](#)B. STATE 15811
[1](#)C. PRAGUE 0130

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Mike Dodman
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) Poloff met with MFA CFSP Director Vaclav Balek on February 9 to discuss the February 12-13 GAERC. The discussion was focused on Kosovo/Serbia and the Middle East. Czech policy remains unchanged.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On Kosovo/Serbia, the Czechs will press for EU unity in support of Ahtisaari's proposal at the GAERC, and are optimistic the EU will remain united. Balek believes Serbia's decision to appoint a delegation to negotiate in Vienna on Kosovo's end status is a positive sign. With regard to SAA talks, the Czechs will continue to call for flexibility on the terms for restarting SAA talks with Serbia. Balek said it is important for the EU to emphasize to Serbia that there is no link between the commencement of SAA talks and the negotiation for Kosovo's end status.

[1](#)3. (C/NF) On the Middle East Peace Process, the Czechs think the draft GAERC conclusions on the Middle East Peace process will be clear, concise, and balanced (reflecting the more balanced approach being taken by the German presidency). The conclusions are expected to welcome recent efforts by Fatah and Hamas to form a national unity government. Balek said some EU member states have advocated for a moderate stance on the Palestinian government, but the Czechs will not recognize any government that does not expressly accept the Quartet principles.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Iran will be a top priority at the GAERC. Balek said the foreign ministers' discussion will follow two tracks: (1) Iran's nuclear program, and (2) Iran's efforts to destabilize the region. On the nuclear program, the Czechs support increasingly tough sanctions because they believe sanctions are creating pressure for Ahmedinejad, and may provide arguments for opposition groups in Iran to cooperate with the West.

[1](#)5. (U) Post has reported Czech views on the state of the Doha Development Agenda (Ref B) separately (Ref C).
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